

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 02493 031305Z
ACTION SS-25

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O R 031126Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFOO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

S E C R E T BEIRUT 2493

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPER, LE
SUBJECT: SITUATION AT TYRE

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 1254, (B) USUN 01771, (C) USDAO TEL AVIV
021355Z MAY 78

1. I HAVE JUST COME FROM MEETING WITH FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO
DISCUSS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT AT TYRE BETWEEN FRENCH FORCES
AND PALESTINIANS. HE IS OF OPINION, AND I AM INCLINED TO
AGREE, THAT UNIFIL IS IN IMPOSSIBLE POSITION. THEY HAVE
THIN BELT OF TROOPS ALONG THE LINE AROUND TYRE AND ALONG THE
LITANI AND NOBODY BEHIND THEM EXCEPT AN ENGINEERING DETACHMENT
AT TIBNIN. IF UNIFIL TROOPS TAKE THEIR MISSION SERIOUSLY AND
TRY TO PREVENT ENTRY OF ARMED PALESTINIANS INTO AREA, AND
IF IT IS TRUE AS DAO TEL AVIV MESSAGE REPORTS (AND WE SUSPECT
IT IS) THAT PALESTINIANS ARE GOING TO MAKE CONCERTED EFFORT

SECRET

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PAGE 02 BEIRUT 02493 031305Z

TO ENTER AREA ISRAELIS HAVE JUST EVACUATED, THIS IS GOING TO
MEAN CONSTANT CLASHES BETWEEN UNIFIL AND PALESTINIANS. IT WILL
MEAN CONTINUED CASUALTIES ON EACH SIDE AND AT SOME POINT THIS
IS GOING TO BECOME POLITICALLY UNSUPPORTABLE.

2. VARIATION ON THIS IS THAT CERTAIN CONTINGENTS WILL NOT
TAKE THEIR DUTIES SERIOUSLY AND WILL PERMIT ENTRY OF PALESTINIANS

OR, EVEN IF THEY DO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY, WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PREVENT IT BECAUSE THEY ARE SPREAD TOO THINLY ALONG THE LINE. AREA IN BACK OF UNIFIL TROOPS WILL GRADUALLY FILL UP WITH INFILTRATORS AND UNIFIL WILL FIND THEMSELVES EXPOSED FROM THE REAR.

3. WE BOTH AGREED THAT THIS WAS VERY DIFFICULT SITUATION FOR WHICH WE SAW NO SOLUTION, PARTICULARLY GIVEN INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS OF LEBANESE TO MAKE REAL EFFORT TO ASSERT THEIR AUTHORITY IN THE REGION. JUST HOW SIILASVUO PROPOSES TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM WE DO NOT KNOW. THERE ARE MILITARY JUDGMENTS INVOLVED WHICH WE ARE IN NO POSITION TO MAKE, BUT GIVEN WHAT IS NOW GOING ON IN TYRE WE EXPECT ISRAELIS TO SAY THEY TOLD US SO, AND THEY ARE, UNFORTUNATELY, RIGHT.

4. WE ALSO DISCUSSED BRIEFLY QUESTION OF UN POLITICAL ADVISOR OR REPRESENTATIVE IN BEIRUT. ARGOD INDICATED THAT QUAI WAS UPSET BECAUSE ESPINASSY, THE SENIOR UNTSO REPRESENTATIVE, HAD ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE CONVOKED BY ONE OF THE PALESTINIANS WHO HAD READ HIM A LECTURE ABOUT THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH THE COMPORTMENT OF UNIFIL TROOPS. WE BOTH AGREED THAT SOME SORT OF LIAISON OFFICE OR OFFICER WAS NEEDED AND THAT ESPINASSY, ALTHOUGH A GOOD SOLDIER, DOES NOT HAVE THE POLITICAL SOPHISTICATION REQUIRED FOR THE JOB.

5. NOTE: THE QUESTION OF LIAISON CAME UP AS A RESULT OF ARGOD'S
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 02493 031305Z

DESCRIPTION OF WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO COL. SALVAN, THE FRENCH COMMANDER WHO HAD BEEN WOUNDED SERIOUSLY IN THE LEGS. HE WAS BROUGHT TO THE GAZA HOSPITAL IN THE SABRA REFUGEE CAMP BY THE PALESTINIANS WHERE AN OPERATION WAS PERFORMED ON HIM LAST NIGHT BY A SURGICAL TEAM FROM THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL. THE FRENCH DCM AND MILITARY ATTACHE WERE AT THE HOSPITAL AS WE WERE TALKING, TRYING TO ARRANGE TO TRANSFER HIM TO THE FRENCH HOSPITAL IN BEIRUT. ARGOD HAD RECEIVED THE MESSAGE BY TELEPHONE THAT THEY WERE HAVING DIFFICULTIES WHICH WERE UNSPECIFIED. WE BOTH SHRUGGED OUR SHOULDERS AT THE IRONY OF THIS AFFAIR, I.E., THE UN DOES NOT EVEN HAVE THE APPARENT CAPABILITY FOR IMMEDIATE MEDICAL EVACUATION OF ITS OWN PERSONNEL TO ONE OF THE ESTABLISHED HOSPITALS IN BEIRUT, AND THE PALESTINIANS, WHO ARE ULTIMATELY RESPONSIBLE FOR SALVAN'S BEING WOUNDED, ARE THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TAKING CARE OF HIM.
PARKER

SECRET

NNN

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